

Montana Board of Public Education
Position Statement on Tobacco-Free School Policies

Rationale

Despite the decline in the use of smoke and smokeless tobacco, too many Montana youth still use tobacco products.

While virtually every Montana school district has a tobacco policy that prohibits tobacco use by students while on school property or at school events, only three of every ten schools have a comprehensive tobacco-free school policy.

Montana law prohibits the use of tobacco products in public school buildings or on public school property. Federal law states that no person shall permit smoking within any indoor facility used for the provision of kindergarten, elementary, or secondary education or for library services. Compliance with current state and federal law would make a school "tobacco free" and adoption of a comprehensive policy will provide a local school board with district-specific implementation of the laws.

Schools that intend to provide effective, school-based education programs to prevent tobacco use and addiction should also provide a tobacco-free environment. Tobacco prevention education, adult role modeling of non-smoking behavior, and strong tobacco-free school policies combine to create a positive and protective environment in which youth can remain tobacco free and learn the behaviors that will help them become healthy adults.

Policy Content

A comprehensive tobacco-free school policy prohibits tobacco use by all persons – students, staff or other adults – while on school property or at school-sponsored events. The policy ensures a tobacco-free school environment that supports effective classroom-based tobacco use prevention education. The essential elements of a comprehensive tobacco-free school policy are:

- a ban of all tobacco products on the entire school campus;
- a clear no-use and no-possession statement at all times for all students;
- a clear no-use statement at all times for all staff and other individuals visiting or using the school or any of its property;
- a ban on tobacco advertising on school property, at school functions, or in school publications;
- enforcement provisions for violations of the policy, and
- support for classroom-based instruction on tobacco use prevention, including training for teachers whose instructional duties would include tobacco use prevention content.

Sample policies are available from the Office of Public Instruction and the Montana School Boards Association.

Position Statement

The Board of Public Education encourages all Montana school districts to adopt and implement a comprehensive tobacco-free school policy by September 2006.

Dated: May 13, 2005